India remains ready to respond to the urgent needs of the Iraqi people for stability, security, political progress and economic reconstruction. Were there be an explicit UN mandate for the purpose, the Government of India could consider the deployment of our troops in Iraq.

In the meanwhile, Government of India is ready to contribute to the restoration of infrastructure, medical, health, educational, communications and other civilian needs of the Iraqi people. As a concrete gesture of our support to the Iraqi people, we are already planning to set up, jointly with Jordan, a hospital in Najaf in Iraq."

(c) Some countries, mainly part of the Coalition have sent their troops to Iraq.

Bus service between Gangtok and Lhasa

470. SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:
SHRI N.R. DASARI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government of Sikkim has sent a proposal to start a bus service between Gangtok and Lhasa in view of the fact that border trade through Nathula Pass in Sikkim is proposed to be started; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) No.

(b) Does not arise.

Sino-Indian rapprochement

471. DR. M.N. DAS:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Russia has welcomed Sino-Indian rapprochement after the Prime Minister's visit to China;